will do everything possible to safeguard American interests and begs the President to continue his efforts to bring about peace, and my Government will terminate the submarine blockade as soon as it is evident that the efforts of the President will lead to a peace acceptable to Germany. . . .

Yours sincerely,

J. BERNSTORFF.

P.S.—I could not get the translation of the official answer to the President's message ready in time to send it to you. I was in such a hurry to give you the above most important news, namely that the blockade will be terminated if a conference can be brought about on reasonable terms.[3]

This letter, with its intimation that Germany would demand annexations and indemnities from France and Russia, suzerainty over Belgium, and the cession of part of the French and British colonial Empire, accompanied by an announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare, was no peace overture. Italy was ignored except in so far as it was included in the phrase about Austria demanding similar terms to those upon which Germany insisted. It was a challenge to a fight to a finish, and as such the United States had reluctantly to construe it.